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The Miſſion and Duty of Civil Governours, and the Deference due to them.

A

SERMON,

Preach'd before the Right Honourable the

LORD-MAYOR,

THE

COURT of ALDERMEN,

AND

LIVERIES of the ſeveral COMPANIES of *LONDON*:

In the Pariſh Church of

St. *LAWRENCE JEWRY*,

On *Wedneſday September* 29, 1742,

Being the Day of Election of a Lord-Mayor, for the Year enſuing.

By *SAMUEL SMITH*, L. L. B.
Rector of *Allhallows on the Wall.*

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EDVVARD MILLIGEN BELOE CORONER OF KING'S LYNN IN THE COUNTY OF NORFOLK.

1 PETER ii. 14.

Or unto Governours, as unto them that are ſent by him, for the puniſhment of evil-doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well.

THE beſt of men, and the beſt of inſtitutions, have encountered popular prejudices, and been miſrepreſented through malevolence, or inattention. But the falſe ſuggeſtions, and diſguiſes calculated to miſlead our judgments to their diſadvantage,

prove occaſionally an incitement to more accurate enquiries, and procure for them, in the ſequel, a double meaſure of our eſteem and reverence. It was an injurious calumny caſt upon the firſt chriſtians, that they were implacable enemies to government, and averſe from the reſtraints of human laws. They were accuſed of diſcliming ſubmiſſion to the imperial authority of *Cæſar*, and of being the fomenters of ſedition; than which there could not be a groſſer or more invidious miſrepreſentation of their declared principles. To remove this imputation, and all prepoſſeſſions in diſfavour of their civil deportment, our apoſtle exhorts them *to ſubmit themſelves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's ſake: whether it be to the king*

king as ſupreme, or unto gover-nours, as unto them that are ſent by him, for the puniſhment of evil-doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well. The pronoun *him*, may refer to God, or *Cæſar*. Governours may without any im-propriety be ſaid to be ſent by God, tho' ſent by the appointment and intervention of the emperor or ſe-nate. It will not be unſuitable to the ſubject of my text, or to the preſent ſolemnity, to conſider,

I. The miſſion and dignity of governours, they *are ſent by* God, or the Lord.

II. The ends of their appoint-ment and authority, *the puniſh-ment of evil-doers, and the praiſe of them that do well.*

III. The deference due to them, *ſubmit yourſelves.*

I. The miſſion and dignity of governours. Governours are ſent by God, and their power is a rivulet or emanation from the inexhauſtible fountain of power. That magiſtracy is a mere human ordinance, that the authority of God's vicegerent is revocable at our diſcretion, and may be reſiſted whatever incidents ſhould call for its interpoſition, are tenets only fit to be vented by the ſons of anarchy, who are impatient of all rule, and diſparage the mildeſt form of it as a galling yoke of oppreſſion and bondage. Were theſe men without exception or diſguiſe to lay open the true principles

of their conduct, we ſhould find them determined to give into any wild ſyſtem, that could be accommodated or bent to their inclinations, and flattered their deſires of unbounded liberty. Their corrupt intereſts, and favourite affections, have ſo powerful an aſcendancy, that it defeats all attempts for their conviction.

God's delegation of his authority to the magiſtrate, will warrant his conduct in proceeding to the condemnation of offenders, and the infliction of capital puniſhments. This would be ſtretching far beyond the bounds that limit it, a commiſſion founded only in human compact. Suppoſe the right of dominion and government to flow from the paternal relation,

this

this does not give a power to take away the lives of children. Suppoſe a body of men to enter into contract, and to reſign certain natural rights, upon views of mutual convenience and ſecurity. No man under any ceſſion, or reſignation of natural rights and privileges, could transfer to another what he had not himſelf, that is, a power to diſpoſe of his life. Admit the ſupreme authority reſides in the people, and in contrariety to the declarations of ſcripture, and all the rules of ſubordination, aſcends from them to the prince, the ſame difficulty remains equally inſuperable upon this hypotheſis. Whether the office devolves upon him by ſucceſſion and inheritance, or by election, whatever circumſtances of ſolemnity may accom-

pany

pany his deſignation to it, we take off all the force of the objection, by deducing the origin and extent of his authority from God. He who has an abſolute and indefeaſible right over us, may inveſt the magiſtrate with this branch of his ſovereign prerogative, and commiſſion him to deprive malefactors of their lives. *The Lord and giver of life*, may take it away upon an indiſputable maxim of equity, that it is lawful for all to do what they will with their own; for He did not extinguiſh or alienate his own propriety in the firſt donation. Beſides, if government was inſtituted by God, a grant of all diſcretionary powers neceſſary for the regular exerciſe and adminiſtration of it, muſt have been involved

volved, by neceſſary conſequence, in the original inſtitution.

Our Saviour's anſwer or reproof to *Pilate*, when expatiating on the topic of his authority, carries in it our main concluſion, and deſerves therefore in this place particular obſervation. *Thou couldſt have no power at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above**. Which paſſage according to its obvious interpretation, affords uncontefted evidence, if not a direct aſſertion of the point in queſtion, that governours derive their authority from God. As to our Lord's crucifixion or death, ſecond cauſes, however co-operating, were free in their co-operation, and did not appear to produce this event

* *John* xix, 11.

under

under any ſupernatural direction. *Pilate* was the *Roman* governour of *Judea*, and had cogniſance of capital miſdeamenors. His power was eventually ſubſervient, by his voluntary miſapplication of it, toward accompliſhing *the determinate counſel of God* for our redemption. It is not to be reſolved into any ſpecial licence or peculiar diſpenſation, but into that general commiſſion, which was given him, in common with all other governours, and magiſtrates *from above*. No magiſtrate can poſſibly abuſe his judicial authority more than *Pilate* did, in condemning the moſt innocent man upon earth, and of whoſe innocency himſelf was convinced, upon a complicated charge of blaſphemy and ſedition. But our Saviour did not

impeach his power and juriſdiction, tho' he forſaw, that they would be proſtituted to the gratification of an undiſtinguiſhing and enraged multitude. He did not reproach him for the injuſtice and cruelty of his ſentence; for being influenced by groundleſs accuſations, and criminal regards of ſelf-intereſt and popularity, to violate his conſcience. He was not, he could not, be provoked to inſinuate the leaſt oblique reflection, upon *Pilate*'s corrupt and tyrannical adminiſtration; tho' probably *Pilate* apprehended that a formal complaint of it to *Tiberius* might enſue, upon his incompliance, and this was his principal motive for ſatisfying the *Jews* now at the expence of ſo ſo baſe a condeſcenſion. The leſſon of ſubjection to *higher powers*, ſo warmly

warmly inculcated by the apoſtles, ſeems to have been copied from that moſt illuſtrious pattern of all virtues, the life of Chriſt, in whoſe laſt ſcene it was thus remarkably exemplified.

Should it be asked, whether the governour has any commiſſion to produce under the great ſeal of heaven for the power which he claims, I anſwer, that it is enrolled in ſacred writ, and is a commiſſion which no human authority can ſupercede. His credentials are exhibited and confirmed to us in thoſe ſcriptures which declare he is ſent by God. *There is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whoſoever reſiſteth the power reſiſteth the ordinance of God**.

* *Romans* xiii.

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The doctrine laid down in my text, and atteſted by other parallel places, cannot be cenſured as implying an undue exaltation of the governour's authority, ſince he muſt be accountable for the abuſe of it, as well as any other talents and capacities which he poſſeſſes. The higher his miſſion or dignity is, proportionably ſtronger are the tyes and engagements laid upon him, to a vigilant diſcharge of the employment which he fills. For he is ſent,

II. *For the puniſhment of evil-doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well*: or as it is expreſſed in the words of our excellent liturgy, which are the beſt comment upon my text, *that they may truly*

truly and indifferently adminiſter juſtice, to the puniſhment of wickedneſs and vice, and the maintenance of God's true religion, and virtue: Theſe two acts of duty are joined by the apoſtle, and their connection is founded in the nature of things. Whatever contributes to the infamy and ſuppreſſion of vice, muſt contribute *negatively*, to the praiſe and ſupport of virtue; but praiſe is a kind of reward, and may here be taken by a *ſynecdoche* for all ſorts of rewards.

The metropolis, ſo conſpicuous for her trade, ſo inriched by it with inhabitants, and a flow of opulence, muſt be diſtinguiſhed by the *moral* impreſſions, ſhe ſtamps upon numbers reſorting to her, who adopt her cuſtoms, and diverſions.

diverſions. She will by her extenſive influence communicate a taint to, or contribute to refine, the manners of the kingdom. She may be juſtly repreſented under the figure of a *city that is ſet on an hill, and cannot be hid.* Her chief governour has at leaſt an inſtructive leſſon conveyed to him in the alluſion, and ſhould be a ſhining example of every virtue he recommends. This will animate his recommendation, and add new weight to the authority with which he is armed. *As the judge of the people is himſelf, ſo are his officers; and what manner of man the ruler of the city is, ſuch are all they that dwell therein**.

* Eccluſ x. 2.

But

But the magiſtrate's example, how bright ſoever, will not be of itſelf ſufficient. Immorality and violence muſt be reſtrained by wholeſome diſcipline, and the execution of penal laws. Was the civil ſword on no occaſion to be unſheathed, or turned againſt evil-doers, vice would appear with the confidence of virtue, and trample under foot every thing that is ſacred. Injured innocence, naked and unguarded, would always fall a ſacrifice to ſucceſsful villany, and *the heart of the ſons of men would be fully ſet in them to do evil**. The laws of God *who loveth righteouſneſs, and hateth iniquity*, are the model whereby all governours ought, as far as they can, to form

* Eccles. viii. 11.

and

and regulate their adminiſtration. He, by an immutable declaration of his will, has annexed a puniſhment to our ill deeds, and a reward to our good ones; but both are *chiefly* reverſions. Human laws are generally defective in this particular; they award penalties to the commiſſion of crimes, but allot no recompenſe to the performance of laudable actions. Virtue then wants *immediate* advantages, and the intereſts of it might be perhaps conſulted more, than they uſually are, in the diſtribution of public honours, and other temporal encouragements. The native beauty and power of virtue, may appear attractive in theory, but they have little influence experimentally upon common life: Neither can we expect, that ſuch

refined

refined conſiderations ſhould have more in a world, where we are ſurrounded with allurements to vice. Religion being of ſuch confeſſed importance to the ſtate, the magiſtrate's duty to promote it, by all ſuitable inducements, ariſes from the fundamental principles of ſociety, if it is not to be placed in the foremoſt rank of his civil obligations. The work of reformation demands his unſhaken reſolutions, and vigorous endeavours; leſt his own account ſhould be inflamed by the ſins of other men, and the growing apoſtacy. Religion muſt gain, or loſe ground, according to his activity, or unconcernedneſs, for the protection and advancement of it. There can be no ſignificancy in objecting that the *temporal* advantages at-

tendant upon virtue, will be temptations to hypocriſy; the ſame objection may be made to temporal puniſhments, which are only a guard or reſtraint upon our external behaviour. For if men are not virtuous, as they ought to be, upon *principle*, their hypocriſy lies not at the magiſtrate's door, but their own. But it would be better for ſociety, that they ſhould wear the maſk of virtue upon ſecular motives, though devoid of the internal power, than live in the barefaced practice of immorality. What a malignant diſtemper is to the body, that is vice to the community. Whether any particular part of the body, may be ſuppos'd to be the ſeat, and centre of infection or not, vice evidently deſcends by a ſwift contagion from

thoſe of a ſuperior rank; whoſe taſte and actions, vitiated and irregular as they are, have force enough to attract imitation, and arbitarily form the general ſtandard of mode and faſhion. Diligence and ſobriety, juſtice, charity and good oeconomy, the virtues proper to the ſeveral orders of which ſociety is compoſed, are the maſterſprings upon which the ſoundneſs, and vigour of the political conſtitution, or ſyſtem depend. Some errors may have been entertained and eſpouſed, ſome wickedneſs indulged and abetted, in the pureſt ages of the world. But we may obſerve, without libelling the age we live in, that it is overrun with luxury, licentiouſneſs, and extravagant opinions; unhappy ſymptoms of an epidemic infection,

or national depravity. Unleſs proper remedies are applied to ſtop their progreſs, they are ſure prognoſtics of ſome great convulſion, if not a diſſolution of government. It may be ſuggeſted, that the governour is confined by this deſcription of his office, to the correction of enormities in practice, and cannot extend his cogniſance to errors in judgment, or ſpeculative opinions. But it deſerves to be conſidered by him, whether the opinions propagated are merely ſpeculative, or whether they may not have an influence to debauch the purity of our morals, and looſen the bands government. *If the root be holy, ſo are the branches**. Effects lie concealed in their cauſes, branches in there roots, and actions in the

* *Romans* xi, 16,

prin-

principles from which they regularly flow. Ill principles are the fruitful ſeeds of immorality. When artfully ſcattered they will take root in a good ſoil, that is, in thoſe who have a good natural diſpoſition, and ſoon ſhoot forth (ſuch is the luxuriancy of their growth,) in an irregular life. Now morality is interwoven in every imaginable plan of ſociety, and conſequently the proper object of national concern; And a zeal for morality, if conducted according to knowledge, will terminate in the defence, and eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity. For every article of moral virtue is illuſtrated by the doctrines, and enforced by the ſanctions of the chriſtian diſpenſation. If our governours are to be the guardians of our conſtitution,

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we may pertinently remark, that our church is a part of it, and cannot be undermined without weakening, or overthrowing the foundation of the fabrick.

The principal qualifications of a good magiſtrate, need not before *this* audience any laboured deſcription. They are ſo well underſtood by you, and attended to, upon the return of this annual ſolemnity, that what falls to the preacher's province, is not any arrogant direction of your *preſent*, or *future*, but the due commendation of your *paſt* choice. An inviolable regard, in all his deciſions, to the principles of virtue and juſtice, is the grand attachment, to which every other view of an upright magiſtrate is ſubordinate,

and

and the paſſion that bears ſovereign ſway in his ſoul. Such an impartial and diffuſive diſpenſation of the benefits of government, muſt endear the remembrance of his adminiſtration to all, who do not examine it with the purblind eye of prejudice, which ſees nothing in its true colours and proportions.

Account for the origin of government as you pleaſe: That it was ordained for the preſervation of our peace and property, from diſturbance and invaſion; for the prevention or diſcouragement of vice, and the promotion of virtue, admits of no contradiction. I ſhould preſent to you an ungrateful image, by bringing into view the tragical ſcenes of war and deſolation, produced on the ſtage of the world

world by reſtleſs ambition. Theſe calamities are no proof of the inexpedience of government but a very melancholly one of the *follies, miſtakes, and male adminiſtration of thoſe that manage it**. May the moſt refined ſchemes of policy be juſtly abhorr'd, which are founded in flagrant injuſtice, or deviate from the maxims of pure religion. If it is our duty to obey temporal governours, for God's ſake, we are bound by an antecedent obligation to obey God, who only has every perfection required, to induce an unlimited reſignation to, and dependance upon Him. It muſt be impoſſible for us, *while we ſee through a glaſs darkly*, to account for the triumphs of the ungodly, and many events of an inau-

*Dr. *Prideaux*'s Connect. Vol. III. Page 445.

inauſpicious aſpect upon innocence and righteouſneſs, which happen in the ordinary courſe, or by the particular interpoſition of providence. *God's judgments are unſearchable, and his ways paſt finding out**. But every ſeeming obſcurity, that now ſhades his diſpenſations will vaniſh, before that light which a future ſtate will diffuſe upon us, and muſt be imputed to the ſcantineſs of our comprehenſion.

III. I haſten to my third particular, the reſpect due to governours. *Submit yourſelves.*

This ſubmiſſion may ſignify,

1ſt. The regard due to their perſons, and that on account of

* Romans xi, 33.

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the majeſty of the Being they repreſent. When we kneel before kings, this act of our reverence is not ultimately addreſſed to them, but reflected upon, and terminates in an higher ſovereign, to whom the greateſt of monarchs *do bow and obey*. They are dignified with the authority, and ſometimes with the appellation of God, ſo that in honouring them, we *aſcribe unto the Lord, the honour due unto his name*. We revere through governours him that ſent them, who doth *govern all things in heaven and earth*, and may be ſaid, without a metaphor, *to poſſeſs the throne of an everlaſting kingdom**. The badges of dignity and ſcarlet robe may imprint upon beholders ſome *tranſient* veneration for thoſe who wear them, but we

* Macca b. ii. 57.

owe

owe and ought to pay governours ſubmiſſion upon a nobler principle. Our allegiance to them is founded in the relation they bear to God, as his delegates, and we are not at liberty to renounce it upon every charge of miſ-government. The goſpel was ſo far from cancelling any civil engagements, that it required ſubmiſſion under an heathen empire. We are not to wonder, that they who *deſpiſe government**, ſhould avow their enmity to a religion, which vindicates this inſtitution, and fixes it upon the immoveable baſis of divine authority. Could the goſpel plead no other recommendation, this amiable character muſt entitle it, upon the foot of human policy, to the alliance and patronage of the civil power.

* 2 *Pet.* ii. 10.

Let not the magiſtrate grow gidy with his elevation. Let him not be dazzled with the trappings and regalia, or with the deluſive glare of power; which can only command an *external* homage. Even the ray of divine authority communicated to him, will not ſhine out ſo much as *the light of righteouſneſs**; or the fainteſt reſemblance which he attains of God's moral perfections. The virtues with which he is adorn'd will give him, in the eye of reaſon, a more viſible luſtre and ſuperiority. *Theſe* will raiſe him to that poſt of honour in the affections of mankind, which is not to be ſecured by the ſplendid enſigns of office, or any outward marks of diſtinction, and preeminence.

* Wiſdom v, 6.

2. Another act of ſubmiſſion to governours, conſiſts in a ready compliance with their juſt demands of aid and aſſiſtance. All the ſubaltern officers in a community are entruſted with ſome portion of authority, and like the inferior wheels or movements of a great machine, they ſhould perform their ſeveral functions, and confine themſelves to their appointed ſpheres. The moſt elevated genius cannot equal them to government, without the aſſiſtance of that unerring wiſdom which is from above. But this operates only in concurrence with human aids. We ſhould all aſpire to the honour of being their coadjutors. We ſhould aſſiſt them, as much as in us lieth, in the defence

defence of innocence, the diſtribution of juſtice, and the ſupport of religion*.

3. Our ſubmiſſion to them is to be evidenced by an acquieſcence in their judgments. If we will in no caſe be concluded by their deciſion, we render them inſignificant. Authority

* The excellent ſocieties for reformation of manners, which had an annual meeting at the church of *St. Mary le Bow*, I am informed, now diſcontinue their proceedings. For this reaſon, I ſpeak with due deference to my ſuperiors; it is a duty incumbent on magiſtrates, and private men, to be more active in ſuppreſſing prophaneneſs and immorality—— In a collection of orders made for the city, in Queen *Elizabeth's* reign, there are two regulations which may plead ſome title to our notice. One (by a particular direction of lord *Bacon*) conſiſted in *reducing the number of alehouſes*, the other in *redreſſing the increaſe of inmates*. See *Stow's ſurvey*, enlarg'd by *Strype*, B. v. chap. 31. p. 431. The regularity and virtue of numbers, in lower occupations, will depend much on the good polity and government of *London*, *Weſtminſter* and *Southwark*.

thority, precedence, and ſubordi-
nation are ſo neceſſary, that ſoci-
ety could not ſubſiſt without them
under any conceivable regulation.
An univerſal equality would be
the parent of confuſion. Turbulent
would be the ſtate of affairs, was
every private perſon to aſſume a
power of deciding his own cauſe,
in derogation to all regular autho-
rity, and to *uſurp the ſeat of judg-
ment**. Great attention and ſaga-
city are required to pronounce up-
on controverted claims, and adjuſt
intricate diſputes by an equitable
determination. But we include
in this general denomination not
only inferior magiſtrates, but thoſe
who move in the ſupreme ſphere
of government. I ſhall not take
upon me to preſcribe the preciſe

* Pſalm cxxii, 5.

boun-

boundaries of the ſovereign's power, or the exact meaſures of the people's ſubmiſſion. Both have their limits, tho' difficult to be nicely aſcertained, which diſtinguiſh the one from tyranny, and the other from ſlavery. The proceedings of our governours challenge a candid conſtruction, but no privilege exempting them from inſpection, or if faulty, from an adequate cenſure. The actions of men in high ſtations, may without any breach of decency, be brought to the bar of private judicature, and weighed in an impartial ballance: For they cannot claim from us an *implicit* confidence, under the umbrage of a public character. Such a confidence, if due to them, would preclude all enquiries into their conduct, and deprive their virtues of

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our applauſe, as well as ſcreen from our animadverſion any articles of miſmanagement. Every individual is intereſted in the direction of the ſtate, and muſt, in proportion to the importance of the ſtake he has in it, be affected more or leſs, by the main tenor of their conduct: Not that the publick peace is to be diſturbed by the humour and caprice of every malecontent. *As free* let us not *uſe* our *liberty for a cloak of maliciouſneſs**. To leſſen the credit, and obſtruct the progreſs of meaſures, conducive to the common good, would be the height of inattention to our own intereſts, and ingratitude to our governours of the deepeſt dye. Their actions will be made to look odious, or amiable,

* 1 Pet. ii. 16.

by the dreſs wherein they are ſhew'd. We ſhould guard againſt prejudice and credulity, which turn our eyes always toward their darker ſide, and magnify only their miſcarriages. We enjoy the ſame religious and civil rights, which our forefathers did. Our own *virtue* will be the beſt natural and providential ſecurity, for the enjoyment of theſe rights ourſelves, and the continuance of them to our poſterity. Let the magiſtrate then act ſuitably to the dignity of his commiſſion: *This* will mightily enhance the guilt of any abuſe, or proſtitution of it. Let his other purſuits be ſuſpended, or at leaſt never ſuffered to ſtand in competition with his duty. Let his zeal be contracted, that it may burn the ſtronger, and center in its proper

per point, the publick happineſs. Let us pray for governours, that God would inſpire them with a portion of that wiſdom, which *leads in the way of righteouſneſs, in the midſt of the paths of judgment**. Let us teſtify our regard to them by a reſpectful deportment and becoming ſubmiſſion. Let us *lead quiet and peacable lives in all godlineſs and honeſty*†.

* Proverbs viii. 20. † 1 Tim. ii 2.

FINIS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

FINIS